



NATIONAL POTATO COUNCIL

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Docket Clerk
Research and Promotion Branch
Fruit and Vegetable Programs, AMS, USDA
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Stop 0244
Washington, DC 20250-0244

RE: Amendments to the Potato Research and Promotion Plan
[Doc. No. FV-05-702 IFR]
Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 44
Tuesday, March 7, 2006
Rules and Regulations, Page 11294

On behalf of the National Potato Council, I want to offer the following comments in support of the decision by the National Potato Promotion Board (Board) to increase the assessment to continue programs that positively impact the competitiveness of U.S. potato growers in domestic and foreign markets. The activities of the Board allow growers to pool resources and through small individual contributions conduct consumer research and implement national programs that focus public attention on the nutrition of potatoes and their relevance in contemporary life styles and diets.

The plan of work done by the Board is thoughtfully developed based on focused research and priority setting and importantly is exposed to complete review by growers from all growing regions. Board expenditures are consistently evaluated based on identifiable improvements in potato sales and requirements to demonstrate strong positive returns on program dollars invested.

In short the activities of the Board are of real benefit to the industry and the National Potato Council supports expanding their program activities using the assessment increase approved by the grower representatives serving on the Board.

Sincerely,

John Keeling
Executive Vice President and CEO

Cc: Tim O'Connor, US Potato Board